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E U R O P E A N C H U R C H E S

from the Desk for Documentation concerning Eastern European Churches

World Council of Churches, 17 Route de Malagnou, Geneva

August 1961

No. 3 (11)

Introduction

Readers of the "Current Developments in the Eastern European Churches" will find in its present issue more evidence of what is going on in the religious and anti-religious life in the Eastern European Countries.

Side by side with a strong and powerful Christian conception of life there is a conception of life proudly based on what is called atheist morality.

This most interesting confrontation takes place in terms which often puzzle even those readers who have long taken an interest in what is no doubt one of the most striking intellectual and spiritual developments in the life of mankind today.

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C H U R C H N E W S : U.S.S.R.

A journey to promote unity and friendship
between the churches

The third and fourth numbers of the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" contain long accounts of the visit paid by His Holiness Patriarch Alexius to the heads of the ancient churches in Constantinople, the Near East, Greece and Egypt (see "Current Developments in the Eastern European Churches" No. 1, 1961).

The account in No. 4 is entitled "A journey to promote unity and friendship between the churches, fraternal encounters with Eastern Christians". It begins by summing up the general impressions of the journey:

"The pilgrimage undertaken by His Holiness Patriarch Alexius to the countries of the Near and Middle East, which was rightly described as a journey to promote peace and friendship, was extremely important. Not only did it strengthen the friendly relations between the Russian Church and the Orthodox churches in those countries; it also strengthened the rapprochement with the churches of other confessions - the Coptic Church, the Syrian-Jacobite Church, the Armenian Church and the Ethiopian Church.

"The personal meeting of Patriarch Alexius with the heads and leaders of the Eastern Orthodox churches was indeed a historic event; in some cases (for instance the meeting with Patriarch Cyril VI of the Coptic Church, and with representatives of the Syrian Church including the Syrian Patriarch of India) it was the very first contact made with them in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church.

"In addition the Russian theologians who accompanied the Patriarch had an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the life of the Christians in the East and with their attitude to Orthodoxy, and to get a clear picture of the possibilities for the future unification of the churches. The numerous encounters and conversations with representatives of clergy of other confessions and with Christian activists helped to form real contacts between us and them and to lay the basis for future cooperation.

"During Patriarch Alexius' journey through the countries of the East, great interest and sympathy was shown to the Russian Orthodox Church and its head by all the churches of other confessions.

"These expressions of sympathy were made both by the church leaders and by the great mass of ordinary believers (Copts, Armenians, Syrians and Ethiopians). We representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church were all convinced that the Christians of other confessions in the East respect the Russian Orthodox Church, respect its authority, and wish to have closer contacts with it and unity with it.

"All of us who accompanied His Holiness were deeply impressed by the warm welcome given to the Patriarch by Christians of other confessions in the East. At all these meetings we were filled with great pride in the authority and love which Patriarch Alexius received from them. It was a joy to us to know that we are children of our Russian Orthodox mother-Church, to which the Orthodox and other Christians in the East look as a bulwark of their Christian faith, their helper and protector.

"The representatives of all the other churches were always present at the meetings with the Patriarch, and always there to meet him at the airport. They attended the services which he conducted; they waited upon him and talked with him; they attended all the receptions held in his honour. The constant living fellowship between the leaders and representatives of the churches in the East with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church and his colleagues definitely strengthened the cause of closer unity between the churches.

"These meetings were extremely cordial and fraternal in character. They stressed the need for Christian unity, the need for all the forces of Christianity to unite in order to establish peace on earth. News of church life was also exchanged.

"The Patriarch - and also (with his blessing) Metropolitan Pitirim and Bishop Nikodim (now Archbishop) accompanied by other Russian delegates - also visited the clergy and the theological schools and church organisations of the churches of other confessions in the East. They had friendly talks with their directors, thanked them for their hospitality, and exchanged souvenirs and books about the Russian Orthodox Church.

"Wherever the Patriarch went, he spoke words of love and peace to his Christian brethren in the East, and thus helped to strengthen the friendly relations between the churches, in fulfilment of Our Lord's command 'that they all may be one' (John 17:21)."

The Cross and the Resurrection

(Summary of an article in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate", No.4, 1961)

Faith in the resurrection of Our Lord is the heart of Christian doctrine (I Cor. 15:17, 19). Unless we believe in the resurrection of Christ, the Founder of the Church is nothing more than a man of genius (at the best), or (at the worst) a product of the human imagination - a myth (Arthur Drews).

Christ did rise from the dead. His resurrection was confirmed by witnesses. The eternal light of the Risen Lord illuminates the whole world. Christ celebrates his resurrection still today in the souls of those who turn to him in obedience.

In their day the Pharisees and Saducees tried to undermine people's faith in Christ as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. His death on the cross (a dishonourable death according to Roman law) and the fact that he was forsaken by all men were quoted by Christ's enemies as proofs that he was not sent by God.

Even the Apostles did not always understand him rightly as the Messiah and redeemer of the world, for instance Peter, who had an earthly conception of the Messiah (Matth. 16:13-22), which he afterwards bitterly regretted.

Christ's suffering and crucifixion alone, however, could not lead the believers to perceive his divine nature. It was not until his resurrection from the dead that all doubt about his divine power was dissipated. "With Christ's resurrection the religion of joy, of immortality and eternal life broke into the world."

"Since then everything has been striving towards the light of eternity, towards becoming a new creature. A new age has begun which has no fear of death, and which is certain of the resurrection of all mankind and the renewal of the whole world. The story of Christianity, which is characterised by a ceaseless effort to transform man, nature and the whole creation, bears witness of this certainty."

Amid the fleeting phenomena which form the process of history, "Christ is as it were present himself, and the whole of mankind, the whole world, becomes part of His Body, which is the Church."

The Church appears first of all like a seed, in the form of a tiny group of Early Christians. But it grows and grows until "at the end of time the whole of mankind, and the whole of nature, are included in a divine-human body."

Gathering mankind into the Body of Christ is a long and weary process. It takes a long time for the Spirit of love to penetrate men's hearts, calling them to renewal of life and renewal of the whole world. "Even the people who believe in Christ's resurrection are sharply divided by arrogance and hate."

"Especially among Christians today there are many signs in their life and action of a lack of receptivity to the Risen Christ and his love, admonishing them to peace..."

The Journal continues: "For seven years the Christian armies of France have been trying to suppress the Algerian rebels, as they seek to liberate their country from the French settlers ... Everyone understands this rebellion in Algeria. But France's policy of appeasement in Algeria is incompatible with its Christian culture."

In the Congo, where the Congolese leader Lumumba was deliberately murdered, things are just as bad. "This crime was committed right under the eyes of the forces of the United Nations, who had been sent there to establish peace. Does not the whole responsibility for this crime rest on those who undertook to restore order in the Congo, but failed to protect the lives of the Congolese leaders?"

The "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" then refers to the "Christian government in the Union of South Africa, which is openly pursuing a policy of racial discrimination ..., persecuting those who oppose its anti-Christian policy, and devastating the country." These and other examples of intolerance, hostility and cruelty with their inevitable consequences for suffering mankind are like "shadows of new crosses on Golgatha, on which Christ, the Saviour of the world, is constantly crucified afresh."

Christians must not lose courage; "they must show the way to suffering mankind, in the spirit of Christian love, pointing to a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (II Peter 3:13).

The article closes with a short message from Metropolitan Nestor of Kirovograd and Nikolaievsk entitled "Before it is too late".

"Common sense and the conscience of the nations call upon the whole of mankind to condemn the war-mongers who are planning a third world war. If their machinations succeeded, it would be a terrible disaster for the whole world. It is therefore our sacred duty, both to our own motherland and to the whole world, to strive for the maintenance of peace, remembering the unspeakable suffering inflicted by Hitler's fascists not only on belligerents but also on the civil population of many countries."

Metropolitan Nestor quotes "an order found in the pocket of the uniform" of G. Ziegel, a German lieutenant from Frankfurt-am-Main, after he had fallen. The order says that Hitler's soldiers must have no heart and no nerves, because these are superfluous in war. "Kill every Soviet Russian, whether they are old men, old women, girls or boys, kill them, for you will thereby be saving your own life, ensuring the future of your family, and covering yourself with glory for all time."

Recalling the horrors inflicted on the Russian people during the last war, Metropolitan Nestor closes with a prayer, that God may preserve us from another world war, which certain war-mongers in the imperialist countries want to start. For "we do not think that mankind will permit the outbreak of this war of annihilation."

Church News

Bishop Nikodim, head of the Office of Foreign Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church has been named Archbishop of Yaroslav and Rostov. Aged 32, Archbishop Nikodim was consecrated bishop just last year. Archbishop Nikodim attended the enthronement last week of the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury, where a young Russian Baptist acted as his interpreter.

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At its last meeting, chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Alexius, the Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church decided to appoint Bishop Michael (Tshub) - the present Bishop of Izevsk and Udmursk in the Urals - as Bishop of Tambov and Mitshurinsk in Central Russia. Bishop Michael was one of the members of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church which for the first time met leading representatives of the World Council of Churches at Utrecht, Holland, in 1958.

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First Pan-Orthodox meeting in thirty years

Plans for a meeting of Orthodox leaders, the first of its kind in over thirty years, have been announced by His Eminence Maximos, Metropolitan of Sardes, head of the Pan-Orthodox (ecumenical) Department of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The meeting will be held September 24th to October 1st, on the Island of Rhodes, Greece.

Speaking on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the "first among equals" of leaders of Eastern Orthodoxy, the Metropolitan discussed the plans at a press conference held under auspices of the World Council of Churches. He was on an official five-day visit to headquarters of the world body en route home from the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

Metropolitan Maximos said that relations with other churches will be one of the questions on the agenda for the meeting. He said Orthodox churches have had increasingly good relations with the World Council of Churches and many of its member churches, particularly the Old Catholic and Anglican, and that he hoped that all the autocephalous Orthodox churches now outside the World Council of Churches would soon be members.

Asked about Orthodox relations with the Roman Catholic Church, he said Orthodox leaders will follow proceedings of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council with interest "as we would of any sister church".

He outlined a wide range of agenda items of the Rhodes meeting including: faith and doctrine, work towards a common Orthodox confession of faith, a possible new translation of the Bible and the preparation of study material for popular use, the participation of the laity in the liturgical life of the church and the development of monastic life of the church.

He said particular attention will be given to the task of the Orthodox witness in cultural and social questions. Also under discussion will be ethical questions such as euthanasia, cremation, birth control and family planning, marriage and family life, and the question of divorce. Delegates will also discuss Orthodox work in "mission lands" and the possibility of the publication of a world-wide Orthodox periodical.

A total of 130 persons is expected to attend. Delegates in addition to those from the Ecumenical Patriarchate are expected to be present from the following Patriarchates: Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Moscow, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria; autocephalous churches in Greece, Cyprus and Poland; and autonomous churches in Czechoslovakia, Latvia and Finland.

Observers will also be invited from other Eastern churches including the Coptic, Ethiopian, the Jacobite and Armenian and also from the Anglican and Old Catholic Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches.

The Rhodes meeting will be the first in a series of three and its major task will be the preparation of study material for the churches and of an agenda for the second meeting. Delegates will not discuss the substance of agenda issues. This will be done by the second meeting - the Pro-Synod (or preparatory Synod). The third in the series will be the Synod which will be attended by the heads of the churches as well as by other Orthodox leaders and will make decisions on the issues. The Metropolitan said it is impossible at this stage to say when these other two meetings will be held.

A meeting similar to the Rhodes meeting was last held in 1930 at the famous monastic centre at Mount Athos, Greece, as the first in a proposed three-meeting series. However, world events made completion of the process impossible.

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CHURCH NEWS : RUMANIA

Rumanian Orthodox Church will seek WCC membership

The Rumanian Orthodox Church will apply for membership in the World Council of Churches, as has been announced in Geneva by Metropolitan Justin of Moldavia on behalf of His Beatitude Patriarch Justin of Bucharest.

Metropolitan Justin and four other Orthodox leaders made an official five-day visit to World Council headquarters, en route home from the recent enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury in England.

The Rumanian leader said that the application is being made because his church is eager to take a more active role in the ecumenical movement.

The application will be made officially in September and will be acted upon by the World Council's Third Assembly in New Delhi, November 18th to December 6th, along with the applications for membership of the Russian Orthodox Church and approximately eight churches in other parts of the world. A two-thirds vote of member churches present is required to approve the application.

The Orthodox Church in Rumania represents an estimated 72 per cent of the country's 16,000,000 population. If the application is approved, the church will be the fourth Rumanian church in the World Council of Churches. The Hungarian Lutheran Church in Rumania, the Protestant Evangelical Church of the Augsburgian Confession and the Transylvanian Reformed Church have been members since 1948.

Others in the party visiting the World Council of Churches are His Eminence Maximos, Metropolitan of Sardes, representing the Ecumenical Patriarch (see page 6); His Eminence Joseph, Metropolitan of Varna and Preslav of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria, Professor Moisescu of the Rumanian Church and Deacon Gabriel of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Metropolitan Joseph brought greetings to the World Council on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Cyril of Bulgaria and assured WCC leaders of his church's "warm feelings of friendship and confidence" in the WCC and of its prayers for its work. He said his church will send observers to the WCC's Assembly.

It is the first official visit of Bulgarian and Rumanian Orthodox leaders to the World Council of Churches and according to the Rev. Francis House, WCC Associate General Secretary, is "an important stage in strengthening the ties which unite the Orthodox world with the World Council". Mr. House recently made a three weeks' visit to Bulgaria and Rumania.

During their visit the Orthodox leaders also met with leaders of various other international Christian organisations headquartered here, including the World Presbyterian Alliance, the Lutheran World Federation, the YMCA, the YWCA, and the World's Student Christian Federation.

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C H U R C H N E W S : CZECHOSLOVAKIA

All Christian Peace Assembly

A message adopted by delegates attending the recent All Christian Peace Assembly at Prague declared that "war is irresponsible" in the atomic age, and that the use of such "inhuman" nuclear weapons involves "acting against commonsense" and is "committing a sin against God".

The message was approved by a large majority of the 670 delegates and observers from 40 countries attending the assembly. There were only eight negative votes and 28 abstentions.

"Since the atomic armament race is still going on", the message declared, "we beg all parliaments and governments to do everything that may lead to the abolition of war, and to dare much in this cause".

It said the testing of nuclear weapons should be stopped and that an agreement on international control should be reached by governments now in the possession of such armaments. It also recommended that consideration be given to proposals for "the formation of atom-free zones and the creation of internationally guaranteed treaties of neutrality".

"Today we must continually fix our eyes on the coexistence and constructive cooperation of nations and groups of nations which are living in different economic, political and cultural systems and traditions", it continued. "Mutual condemnation should give place to a friendly competition."

The message further noted that the only way to solve the difficult problems of the underdeveloped nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America is by "a partnership cooperation between all states, between the old nations and the young ones".

It stressed that the older colonial nations must learn that they have to relinquish their position of power, while developed nations must be prepared to make sacrifices to help raise the standard of living in underdeveloped areas.

Nations which spend "exceedingly high sums" for defence were reminded that the limitation of such expenditures would liberate the "economic means whereby hunger and great human distress can be alleviated in the world".

A study commission on peace and the ecumenical movement presented the assembly with a series of recommendations designed to establish contacts with the World Council of Churches.

The delegates received the recommendations, and made arrangements for the continuation of the work of the assembly by unanimous election of Dr. Joseph L. Hromadka, dean of the Amos Comenius Theological Faculty here, as its president.

Delegates also appointed a working committee, headed by Dr. Hromadka, to prepare for the next assembly, which will probably be held in about three years. In the meantime, the committee will arrange regional conferences and study commissions, and assist in the organisation of national committees.

An advisory council was also appointed by the assembly. It will be headed by Patriarch Alexius of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The study commission on peace and the ecumenical movement - one of ten such discussion groups of the assembly - made the following main recommendations relating to the World Council of Churches:

- 1) That leading members of the peace assembly, who regularly attend meetings of the World Council, should take every opportunity to ensure "cross fertilisation" of the work of the two groups on behalf of peace.
- 2) That the continuation committee be asked to consider sending a delegation of three or four persons to Geneva to discuss the way in which the assembly can cooperate with the World Council of Churches and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, before the World Council holds its Third Assembly in New Delhi, India, November 18th to December 6th, 1961.
- 3) That the assembly consider the appointment of a liaison officer between Prague and the World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva.
- 4) That an observer from the Prague assembly be sent to the World Council's Assembly in New Delhi.
- 5) That the continuation committee secure the chief documents issued by the World Council of Churches and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs concerning peace and international affairs and study them in the light of the pronouncements of the Prague peace movement.
- 6) That a delegation be sent to Geneva to propose to officials of the World Council of Churches and the CCIA that a joint working party be established to consider these documents, and to study new problems as they arise.

The study commission stressed that all of its recommendations were intended to strengthen the whole ecumenical movement in its tasks of witness, service and unity.

The chairman, Dr. Viktor Hajek, moderator of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, declared the assembly officially opened after delegates heard a sermon delivered by Dr. Heinrich Vogel, a member of the Evangelical faculty of Humboldt University in East Berlin.

The main assembly report was delivered by Dr. Hromadka. Other papers were presented by Archbishop Nikodim of Russia, Dr. Martin Niemöller of Germany, Professor Inoue of Japan, Dr. Jacob S.A. Stephens of Ghana, Anglican Bishop K.H. Ting of China, and Mr. Richard Ullmann, a British layman.

Sharp attacks against the Roman Catholic Church were made by both Archbishop Nikodim and Dr. Hromadka.

Dr. Hromadka charged that the Roman Catholic hierarchy and "some West German Protestant circles" had made plans aimed against the peace assembly. He denounced these efforts as "incompatible with the Christian faith".

Meanwhile, Archbishop Nikodim claimed that the "supreme Catholic hierarchy is engaging more in politics than in teaching believers Christian morals".

I.

After the introductory speeches, the delegates divided into the 10 study commissions to explore various aspects of promoting peace. A report was then issued at the conclusion of their deliberations as follows:

In the faith in Jesus Christ to whom is given all power in heaven and earth, more than 600 Christians, representatives and members of various churches, confessions and denominations from all over the world, are gathered together in Prague at the first All Christian Peace Assembly.

At the beginning of the atomic age, when the possible self-destruction of mankind is hanging over us and when the world calls for peace, we accept jointly the promises of God: "Peace on earth" and: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God". In the confidence of our faith we are calling on all Christians and all people to trust these promises of the merciful God and to walk in His strength the way of peace.

II.

1. In His son, Jesus Christ, God has made peace between Himself and all men. At the same time He has established the bond of peace and love among men.

We cannot hear, or pass on, this joyful message without committing ourselves with all strength to the establishment, preservation and stabilisation of peace on earth among man and nations.

2. God has reconciled the world to Himself by Jesus Christ and has called His people to the ministry of reconciliation.

We cannot hear, or pass on, this joyful message without pointing out to all men and nations, who are at enmity today with one another, the practical ways and possibilities of understanding each other.

3. God in Jesus Christ has mercifully imparted His righteousness to all men.

We cannot hear, or pass, this joyful message without participating in the elaboration of good laws and good order for all men and groups of men, for all nations and races, and for international relationships in the interest of peace.

4. In His son, Jesus Christ, God has borne us all to this day with great patience and long-suffering. The world lives under this patience till its consummation on the last day.

We cannot hear, or pass on, this joyful message without working in divers ways to the end that all people on earth may have patience with one another, that nations may persist in seeking understanding among themselves and be prepared for mutual sacrifices.

III.

We confess that the whole of Christendom and all of us have long been reluctant to open ourselves to the peace of God and to obey His command of love in order to contribute to the establishment of conditions for peace on earth among men. We are deeply involved in the general restlessness of mankind.

We see with deep sorrow and great anxiety that many Christians deny the commission of our Lord who calls us to the way of peace, reconciliation and righteousness, by legitimising in a pseudo-Christian way the means of mass destruction, by declaring certain social systems unchangeable and by waging the cold war against nations which are building a new order of society. In this connection we find ourselves compelled to say that innumerable fellow-Christians of the Roman Catholic faith who share our longing for peace and who are endeavouring, jointly with us, to avoid the catastrophe of cold and hot war, suffer grave conflicts of conscience because of the conduct of many of their church leaders. Some leading church authorities - and also circles in the Vatican - unfortunately contribute to the continuation of the spirit of cold war.

In saying this we do not cease to pray that God may hold us and our Roman Catholic brethren firmly in His love and may guide us all to the recognition of His will and to the obedience to His command of love and peace.

But God has not withdrawn the promise of His peace, mercy and love towards man: Thus we dare to address ourselves in the name of Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord, to all Christians and our own nations, comforting them, begging them, calling on them, warning them, and preaching to them the message of peace on earth.

May the God of peace grant us and all people the spirit of repentance and prayer, the spirit of confidence and courageous action.

IV.

1. In the light of the peace of God we have recognized:

In the atomic age war is irresponsible and no longer a sensible possibility for solving international problems. Taking mass destruction into consideration at all, threatening with atomic weapons for deterrence's sake, producing such inhuman instruments, instructing young people in their possible use, is not only acting against commonsense but is committing a sin against God.

Since the atomic armament race is still going on, we beg all Parliaments and Governments to do everything that may lead to the abolition of war, and to dare much in this cause.

In order to achieve this the testing of nuclear weapons should be stopped and an agreement on international control should be reached.

Those nations which are not yet armed with atomic weapons should refrain from ever getting weapons of mass destruction.

Everything should be done which furthers a general and total disarmament and organised peace in the world.

All nuclear weapons should be banned and the existing supplies destroyed in order that atomic energy may at last serve peaceful purposes only.

Consideration should be given to efforts and proposals for the formation of atom-free zones and the creation of internationally guaranteed treaties of neutrality.

The unsolved problem of Germany is a dangerous wound on the body of Europe. Therefore we appeal to the churches and Christians, to the governments and to the people in both German states, to recognize the special German temptations in every form of armament, especially in atomic armament, and to make an active contribution to the peace of Europe and the world by sacrificing the concept of trusting in armed forces.

2. In the light of God's reconciliation we have recognized:

The cold war is paving the way for an atomic catastrophe. We know that all nations are longing for peace. There is always cold war where, in spite of this longing for peace, nations and states are striving for prosperity and well-being at the expense of other nations and states.

Today we must continually fix our eyes on the coexistence and constructive cooperation of nations and groups of nations which are living in different economic, political and cultural systems and traditions. Mutual condemnation should give place to a friendly competition.

3. In the light of God's righteousness we have recognized:

All people, all nations, and all governments are confronted today with the difficult task of not only eliminating the war, but of giving the world an order in which also such nations and states as have been neglected in the past can prosper, especially those in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We owe our prayers and full sympathy primarily to these oppressed and despised people who are deprived of their rights and to all those who are on their way to freedom and independence. At the same time we think of those people and states of the white race of whom it must be demanded today, that they renounce their influence and supposed right, their riches and sources of raw materials, especially in the above-mentioned parts of the world. The old colonial powers must learn that they have to give up their positions of power. Nations living in better material circumstances must understand that they have to be prepared for sacrifices in order to help raise the standard of living of nations in great need.

The only way of solving the difficult problems of the so-called underdeveloped countries, as we see, is a partnership cooperation, between all states, between the old nations and the young ones. Racial presumption, every form of new colonialism, but also all delay in removing the acute needs of millions of people, will only sow the seeds of hatred and endanger the peaceful coexistence of nations.

We remind those nations, which spend exceedingly high sums for their armament, of the fact that all limitation of their own expenditure liberates economic means whereby hunger and great human distress can be alleviated in the world and nations can be given access to the plenty of the goods of the earth. Speedy action is necessary.

4. In the light of God's patience we have recognized:

Unheard of technical possibilities are at our disposal today. We can use them for the curse and destruction or for the blessing and benefit of the earth and its inhabitants.

In the faith in God's mercy and long-suffering we are confident that He will save the life of mankind and will uphold peace among the nations of the earth. But He will demand and use human efforts for the peace among nations, and for human reconciliation and righteousness on earth.

V.

In this work for peace all men can be united, for God the Lord holds everything in His hands. He guides all men according to the counsel of His love and He will speak the last word in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His goodness which charges us to call on all men of good-will to join in our work. The peace of God which passes all understanding will keep our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Repairs to churches

This year's budget in Czechoslovakia includes an item of 25 million KCS for the restoration and repair of churches.

CHURCH NEWS : HUNGARY

Annual meeting of the Hungarian Ecumenical Council

The Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary held on the 29th of May its annual meeting at which a great number of interested guests - among them Miss L. Meyhoffer, Secretary of the Division of Interchurch Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches - were also present.

The English edition of the Hungarian Church Press Service reports as follows:

"In his opening address Bishop Dr. Tibor Bartha, President of the Ecumenical Council, welcomed the guests and expounded that the service of the Hungarian churches also within the framework of the Ecumenical Council, pursued the aim that we 'in obedience to the word try to do the good thing', while aligning ourselves with the forces operating for the good and peace of mankind. 'We have concentrated all our attention on the task of mobilising and preparing our member churches for this service. God, while bestowing the gift of tasks upon us, also increases our fitness to discharge our service. One of the indications of this growth is the good relationship that exists between our member churches."

The meeting adopted the following:

"The Ecumenical Council thanks God for the privilege that the Hungarian Protestant Churches have had by actively taking part, from the beginning, in the preparations for the All Christian Peace Conference, while they themselves also being built up in the exercise of their responsibility for the service of the church. The Ecumenical Council addresses the fraternal appeal to the congregations of the member churches to continue their united contribution to the preparations for the All Christian Peace Conference by their prayers and gifts. The Ecumenical Council invokes God's blessing upon the Hungarian delegation and requests its members to represent in Prague faithfully and in unison the common stand of the Hungarian churches. The Ecumenical Council hopes that the All Christian Peace Conference will help world Christendom go forward on the road of peace-making. The meeting of the Ecumenical Council shares these expectations also with retired Bishop D. Albert Bereczky who has addressed a message to the All Christian Peace Conference. The meeting greets with true brotherly love the leaders of the Christian Peace Conference of Prague and asks them to accept the gift of our congregations, as a token of the love of the Hungarian Churches, a bust of the late D. Bohuslav Pospisil, the initiator, of blessed memory, and the first general secretary of the Christian Peace Conference. The Hungarian member churches are looking forward with brotherly interest to the coming meetings of the Lutheran World Federation, the Presbyterian World Alliance and the World Council of Churches and also to all those resolutions of these meetings which will promote the service of the Church Universal in the interests of life and man.

"The Ecumenical Council greets with true respect and love Professor Dr. Karl Barth on the occasion of his 75th birthday. The Ecumenical Council pays the tribute of recognition and appreciation to his human character and his theological work of epochal significance which, in the midst of the historic transformation of our epoch, gives clear and definite guidance to the church. The gratitude of the Ecumenical Council is enhanced by the consideration of the special love and interest which Karl Barth has always had for the Hungarian churches. The Ecumenical Council prays for God's blessing upon his further life and upon the service he is to carry out for the good of the church and mankind and to God's glory.

"The Ecumenical Council greets with love Albert Schweitzer whose life work is appreciated as a far-spreading example of the unity of Christian faith, word and deed."

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CHURCH NEWS : POLAND

Churches urged to keep striving for peace

Lutheran churches throughout the world were urged by the Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee to continue their efforts so "that true peace may reign and that genuine reconciliation may bring about real fellowship of all men."

A statement adopted by the committee on July 1st at the close of its five-day meeting said:

"At Warsaw, a city of many painful memories of the last world war, the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Federation was the guest of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland and has had the opportunity to become acquainted with her great and tragic history.

"In view of the present international tensions, the Executive Committee, taking its responsibility seriously, requests the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation to continue to carry out with courage and patience the task of the Church of Jesus Christ in the world, so that the fear of God may rule the nations, and that true peace may reign and that genuine reconciliation may bring about real fellowship of all men."

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A T H E I S T P R O P A G A N D A I N T H E U.S.S.R.

"An important aspect of life"

The well-known pioneer of atheism and anti-religious author, I. Kryvelev, sums up the provisional results of atheistic propaganda in an article published in the monthly paper "The Communist" in May 1961. "The Communist" is the organ for the political theories of the central committee of the communist party of the USSR, which expresses the achievements of the communist education. Kryvelev's article therefore assumes particular importance. His article is entitled "An important aspect of life". It begins:

"Religion is incompatible with the fundamental views of the communist society. There is no room in the communist order for the remnants of religion. The victory over religion cannot be achieved directly; it is a complicated process involving contradictory arguments, religion has permeated people's consciousness and way of life to a tremendous extent. The remnants of religion are expressed not only in the belief in the truth of certain dogmas which form one of the religious confessions; they also include emotional experiences which elude the control of logical thought. Moreover the traditional forms of life connected with religion and the religious worship are also very important factors. These different elements of the religious complex do not all show the same resistance to aggressive atheism so that they have to be attacked in different ways."

I. Kryvelev writes that investigations into this process in the USSR have shown that of all the elements of which religion is composed the most resistant are the traditional acts of religious worship, especially the ceremonies connected with the crucial events of life such as birth, the attainment of maturity, marriage or death, "the celebration of which is in the hands of religion". These ceremonies are of an emotional character saturated with religion and at the same time great "occasions for hospitality which are long remembered". The people who observe these ceremonies do not all "do so for religious reasons". Even before the revolution they were observed by tradition "because certain events in life are celebrated according to well established forms".

Thus "almost every religion has a calendar of festivals which are characterised not only by the prescribed services but also by social festivities". The mythological basis of these festivals (Christmas: the myth of the birth of Christ; Easter: the myth of Christ's resurrection) says the paper, is not always of Christian origin but springs from the pre-Christian times from countries of the East. The paper maintains that this can be proved merely by the fact "that Christ never lived", and that "the Jewish people were never in Egypt". "The social expressions of the religious motives are difficult to eradicate" and have lasting effects "although their original religious meaning is growing weaker and weaker". People know that Easter or Whitsun is imminent and that "they can amuse themselves and get drunk".

"These festivals even as non-religious traditions are harmful because their influence retards the process of liberating the people's consciousness from the poison of religion." That is so "even if it may be said today that the majority of the population have broken away from religion... The old traditions connected with religion are breaking down and are gradually being eliminated but they are far from being replaced by new popular forms of celebration...""

There are still many people who have finished with religion but who remain neutral towards religious customs and still tolerate religious ceremonies such as baptism, church weddings, church funerals, Easter and Christmas customs, holidays on religious festivals, etc. This applies still more to those "who are still hesitating between religion and atheism..."

Therefore the retarding influence of religious customs on the process of eliminating religious survivals must not be underestimated. For every religious or semi-religious ceremony demonstrates that religion is still alive and still holds people under its influence. If "a disloyal member of the communist youth organisation gets married in church" that strengthens people in their view "that even the members of the 'Komsomol' cannot get on without the church."

Moreover these ceremonies strengthen the finances of the church. But the main thing is ideological. "We must realise that the observance of religious customs is a proof of surrender to a religious mentality which is hostile to communism."

One of the customs which is still strictly observed is the baptism of children and adults and the circumcision of Jewish and Moslem boys. Less frequent are church funerals and still less frequent church weddings. But, as the author says, the religious significance of each ceremony is often not fully realised; "the secular and religious elements are intermingled". For instance people are not married in church but the parents bless the young couple with an icon; or someone is given a state funeral but at the same time a mass (Panikhida) is said for him, "just in case". Thus the old and the new are mixed in a very strange way. One reason why the religious customs survive is that we have not yet discovered how to create attractive ceremonies to replace the religious ones. People often take refuge in religious customs only "because they do not know of any other effective forms for celebrating festal occasions". People not infrequently "take part in religious festivals only because there are no other opportunities of spending their leisure in a festive way".

There are it is true state festivals like the anniversary of the great socialist October revolution, the first of May, the international women's day (8th March) which have become accepted customs and for which fixed ceremonies are envisaged.

"On these days a holiday atmosphere reigns everywhere. It is of great ideological importance that the anniversaries of the revolution should be commemorated as popular events..." Admittedly, however, many important events, jubilees, harvest festivals, etc. are not always adequately celebrated.

Conclusion: "People need to celebrate festivals in community not only within their immediate circle but with everyone in the neighbourhood... On such days they would like to be among people, with the whole people out in the street". We still do not have many secular national festivals and this naturally benefits religion.

For some time the custom of "Oktiabriny" was widespread. Although it did not involve any special ceremony, to some extent it was a substitute for baptism and circumcision. Today this custom has practically ceased so that the very word is almost unknown among young people today. The experiment of "Komsomol weddings" also needs to be specially stressed. State funerals with the usual speeches are it is true quite frequent. But solemn funerals of this kind are not often held in the country because it is more difficult there than in the towns to ensure that the funeral will be adequate.

During the last few years various organisations (including the Komsomol) in nearly all the People's Republics in the USSR, and also some individual citizens, have seized the initiative in creating new secular customs. The paper "Istvestia" has published some interesting letters on the subject from its readers "which prove how deeply interested the workers are in these questions. A number of public associations, specially on the Baltic have done a great deal of pioneer work for the propagation of secular harvest festivals, choral performances, spring festivals, etc. In several Russian towns good experiences were made with the "festival of winter".

The possibility of combining religious with folklore celebrations was examined by specially appointed bodies (the scientific-atheist section of the Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge in the USSR). The results of this inquiry must now be thought out theoretically and their use must be extended in the framework of the collective effort throughout the Soviet Union... Especially as some of the festivals of religious origin "have lost their religious significance". This applies especially to "Christmas, which is doubtless of religious origin, but which no longer has any religious connotations."

Giving a national colour to religious festivals must also be rejected, for instance "the atheist paper 'Science and Religion' made the mistake of extolling the old heathen Ligo festival in Latvia, because it is not a Christian festival".

"New progressive forms of life must be advocated suited to the lofty, noble norms of the socialist society, to the lofty ethic of the Soviet citizen ... not merely on paper, but in actual fact, adapting these forms to the national character of the people in question. For the customs of Estonia or Latvia are unknown in Russia or Siberia. The ideological, ethical and aesthetic criteria for these forms are derived from the tasks of Communist education, especially among youth."

"The systematic organisation of secular festivals, customs and ceremonies cannot be achieved quickly. First of all a series of particularly important ceremonies must be elaborated to take the place of religious customs (eg. celebrating the birth of a child, handing the Soviet passport to young citizens, marriages, funerals, etc.).

"The old traditions have grown up during the course of many centuries, but our socialist tradition does not need so much time to find expression. We cannot and must not wait for centuries, because in a comparatively short time we can create new traditions and propagate them..."

"The technical facilities for spreading culture today are so powerful and penetrating, that in a very short time we can make certain elements of culture available to the masses. How quickly songs become popular through films or on the radio, television or on records, especially among young people! We shall make full use of all these technical facilities in order to achieve our goal ..."

"However, it would be a mistake to create customs and traditions out of nothing. We must therefore make use of forms which life itself has already created, and with which people are more or less familiar. Our secular ceremonies must have a high artistic level, in order to produce the right emotional effect. Our (atheist) customs and festivals must be more interesting and more beautiful than those of the Church. They must give more scope to the imagination and remain fixed in the memory."

Finally Kryvelev urges the great creative artists to cooperate actively: "Theatre and film producers to arrange for ceremonial poets to compose new songs and hymns, musicians to compose suitable music. And this artistic creativity must be such as is anchored in the socialist life order".

"The communist way of life (byt) has nothing in common with preaching religious asceticism, with its dreary fasts and hypocrisy and its vulgar, tasteless, obscurantist ceremonies." Our festivals "must reflect the beauty and the moral, intellectual and aesthetic mentality of the people who will live in the communist society of the future."

The disastrous course of religious modernism

"It is difficult to find a church which does not condemn attempts to modernise religion. But it is still more difficult to find a church which is not making such attempts all the same. Although they condemn 'modernism' as heresy, in actual fact the Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist and other preachers all surreptitiously make use of 'modernistic' arguments in order to strengthen their empty arsenal of ideas."

These views are taken from "Nauka i Religia" (No 6, 1961), the organ of the All-Soviet Association for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge, which has atheist tendencies.

"Modernism (in the church) has failed. Its miserable attempts to justify religion through reason have broken down. But they have not completely stopped. Every year brings new methods in the scientific interpretation of biblical theses, new proofs of the existence of God which are anti-scientific but at the same time dangerous for religion... In vain the fundamentalists strive to maintain the 'old' faith; equally futile is it to substitute a new, modernised faith for the old one. For religious modernism, like the 'old' faith, is incompatible with reason and progress, to which it is opposed."

The term "religious modernism" or "liberalism" dates from the 19th century. Pope Pius X forced his clergy to take an oath against modernism. In 1909, however, the Vatican was forced to appoint a Bible Commission which recognized that the account of the Creation given in Genesis is not scientific. Since then new modernistic interpretations of the doctrine of the creation have continually been coming up in the Catholic Church.

Among Protestants too the desire for a religion based on "reason" became felt in the 19th century, the article continues. Attempts were made to explain certain biblical doctrines (the Trinity, the Fall, the divinity of Christ, etc.) "reasonably". Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was depicted as "a hero who was a radiant example to mankind."

"Modernism gained ground as the discoveries of science became more and more stupendous." The church could not ignore what was happening. "The discoveries of science destroyed the old faith in religious dogmas." The workers were no longer content with simply hoping for salvation in the next life.

Among modernistic theologians "Nauka i Religia" makes particular reference to the Rev. Harry Fosdick, who described modernism as "adapting the Christian faith to contemporary scientific thought". It contrasts the attitude of the Orthodox Church "which is quite indifferent as to whether the Creation was accomplished within six days or whether it involved long periods of time as long as the part played by God, the Creator, is not forgotten."

The Catholic Church has accepted the theory of evolution (as interpreted by men like Bishop O'Bryan) in so far as "it gives us a clearer perception of God, Who works through the natural laws established by Himself."

In the Catholic Church Pope Pius XII has given his blessing to the theory that physically mankind may possibly have evolved from animals, but with the stipulation that "the human soul has its origin in God" (Adam: the first man). The Orthodox Church, on the other hand, "categorically rejects evolution in any form."

With regard to God's action "some churches go further than others in their concepts". The "old" theology maintained that God reveals Himself "through miracles, i.e. by acting against the usual course of things." As science has completely destroyed belief in the miraculous, the modernists insist that "one cannot expect special miracles; one must perceive God's action in the normal phenomena of nature."

On the other hand, the writer says, Orthodoxy, like most Protestants (Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians, Calvinists, etc.) openly declares that it only recognizes "reason directed by faith". Ultimately even the most radical modernists only offer a substitute for the interpretation and justification of religious faith. "The limited place given by theologians today to modernism (as a method of adapting their doctrines to scientific thought) is their weak point". For in modernist thought too the theological bases remain hostile to science. "The facts of modern science confirm the rightness of the philosophical conclusions of materialism, according to which matter is in constant movement, was never created, and therefore cannot be destroyed." All the rationalistic, de-mythologised concepts of God, the creation, sin, etc. are just as hostile

to scientific thought as their "old" patterns. The "evolution of God's grace" preached by the modernistic theologians has nothing in common with science.

When the modernists state that one cannot rely on everything in the Bible, this means in other words that one cannot defend the idea that one can believe anything in the Bible at all.

Formally all the churches maintain that the Bible is divinely-inspired. "In order to explain the discrepancies in the Bible, the theologians say that some of the biblical books are inspired more than others". And every church declares those biblical passages to be inspired on which its own doctrines are based.

"Nauka i Religia" goes on to quote statements made by the Anglican Episcopal Church in 1958 (the Bible as history-book of the old, primitive people in pre-democratic times with their pre-scientific conception of the universe), but this did not stop the church from believing in the biblical concepts ("if faith and imagination are so much alive, then the Bible and the contemporary world are not so very far apart"). "Nauka i Religia" comments: "one can hardly conceive of a more unhelpful justification for the Bible".

"At the end of the 19th century an International Council of Churches was founded by the Southern Baptists in the USA with the slogan 'The Bible and the Christian faith are in danger!' Its purpose was to combat the modernistic tendencies in the church. This organisation is still in existence today, and must not be confused with 'the liberal World Council of Churches'".

Later on came the "Fundamentalist" movement which proclaimed the infallibility of the Bible, the virgin-birth of the Christ-God, his physical resurrection, man's redemption from sin through him, and the actual return of Christ ...

"Nauka i Religia" quotes the well-known American journalist Walter Lippmann, describing a discussion between a fundamentalist and a modernist and saying that it is not the church, but atheism, which benefits by the quarrel between the fundamentalists and the modernists.

In conclusion "Nauka i Religia" writes: "If the world was created in six days, then it is clear that it is God's handwork. But if the church itself admits that it tooks milliards of years for the world to become what it is today, then one may be permitted to ask, what has God to do with it? The idea that man is the ultimate goal of the whole creation is inseparably linked with the concept of God the Creator..."

"But if it is proved that the universe is infinite and that there is life on all the other planets also, this invalidates the religious notion that the universe was created by God."

"The logical conclusion of modernism, therefore, is not to save the 'old' God but to de-throne Him. Among the modernists the place of the awe-inspiring Creator-God of the Bible is taken by a vague deity who is infinitely far away from everything human. Which means that His throne is really empty."

Ossipov replies to his correspondents

The latest article published by A.A. Ossipov, the atheist propagandist, is entitled, "My answer to believers". The author, formerly Professor of Theology at the Theological Academy in Leningrad, left the Russian Orthodox Church and became a militant atheist in 1959. He published his reasons in the Moscow "Pravda" and was then excommunicated by the Orthodox Church (see "Current Developments in the Eastern European Churches" Nos 1, 2, 3, 1960).

After publishing this article about his breach with the Orthodox Church, Ossipov received letters from all over the USSR, often anonymous ones, some praising him, others blaming him for his decision. He is now answering them "en bloc".

His "answer to believers" has been published in the popular scientific "Library of the Atheist" (Leningrad), which brings out cheap anti-religious pamphlets at 60 kopeks each.

The pamphlet is divided into three parts. The first asks, "Why do religious people get so indignant about those who leave the church?" The second section is an "Answer to a theologian". The third is entitled, "In the USSR man is not alone without God".

In a short preface the author urges those readers who have doubts about religion to break away from their religious group, and not to be afraid of the difficulties this will involve - both external and spiritual.

In the case of Ossipov, the "religious prejudices which had been instilled into him for decades could not all be eliminated at once. But his desire to be sincere had released him from the shackles of religion."

Extracts from: Why do religious people get so indignant about those who leave the Church?

"Those who leave the church are criticised, in order to weaken the impression that this makes on other believers ... At the beginning his decision is hushed up, for tactical reasons. Later on the church says, don't let's talk about him. There have always been renegades ... and this has not affected the church."

If the name of the "renegade" (with or without academic education) appears in the paper, he is described as "a psychopathic case" because "religious belief is inborn in man as created by God ... an axiom which one has to accept."

Dr. Ossipov was not described as out of his mind "because one cannot very well employ a madman for fourteen years as a Professor of Theology".

In one anonymous letter Ossipov is accused of being too arrogant ... But (the letter continues) the church will not take any revenge on him ... because his decision to leave the church is the result of a mistake. "Some of his students are praying for his spiritual renewal".

Ossipov replies, "Why waste your time? 'Poor old Ossipov' does not need your prayers."

Ossipov criticises the church because its moral theology "excludes the possibility of a communist ethic". It maintains that the good done by the communists springs from the fact that sub-consciously the communists still retain some vestiges of religious faith ...

He writes, "the letters from Christians throw some light on the true facts about the idea that the Christian faith is the source of everything good and enlightened. Some of these letters reflect the fanatical strife between the different Christian confessions ... For 2,000 years they (the divided Christians) have been praising Christ as the God of love and forgiveness, as the Giver of all good gifts ... but this does not prevent them from throwing mud at people who interpret this same Christ differently from themselves."

Another correspondent criticised Ossipov for "regarding the church as synonymous with God". "If I find the church intolerable then I hate it as my deadly enemy. But you (Ossipov) regard the church as synonymous with God and transfer your hatred of the church to Him and to religion as a whole."

Ossipov: "Then the writer recommends the true Christian faith, i.e. his own".

Another correspondent recommends Ossipov to read certain passages of the Bible, arranged in such a way "that the Orthodox church's worship of icons and relics appears to be wrong, and the Baptists or Adventists as true Christians".

A man called Goriašev from Riazan writes saying that he is critical of Orthodoxy, and hopes that the (Soviet) State will intervene in church affairs. "The members of the Orthodox Church are hoping that the government will create order in the sphere of religion."

Ossipov: "Comrade Goriašev forgets that in the USSR religion is the personal affair of the individual citizen; consequently the State must refrain from any form of interference." Everyone is free to live in accordance with his religious convictions. It is only the members of the communist party who have to be convinced atheists ... because they realise that religion is an obstacle to the creative growth of the new (Communist) ethic."

Another anonymous correspondent accuses Ossipov for having given up his chair at the Leningrad Theological Academy for financial reasons. Joining the atheists meant better opportunities in his profession.

Even worse is the following letter. "Citizen Ossipov. You are worse than Judas Iscariot, who at least did what he did for the sake of money. But you were not without an income. Whatever did you do it for?"

Ossipov: "The writer does not understand that one can leave Christ for the sake of one's ideals..."

Extracts from: Ossipov's reply to the atheists

"An anonymous unbeliever (Neveruiushchy) asks how much money I received for leaving the church. 'It is true, you are a Professor', he writes, 'nevertheless you are a Prokhvost'" (Scoundrel).

Ossipov: "The reader might conclude that I was bought over by the Soviet government after having been bought over by the church. He thinks it is only a question of who offers most. He wants to convince a man who leaves the church that many atheists regard him with contempt and that he will be completely isolated. By saying this the anonymous writer is insulting the Soviet order of society."

Ossipov then goes on to quote a letter from the priest Basil Zawodshikov (Orenburg): "You profess to be an atheist. What good does that do to anyone? Perhaps to the demons, whom you no longer recognise - just as a mole denies the existence of light because he lives in darkness under the earth."

Ossipov: "An Orthodox priest must not compare the demons with the light. Who is your God, then? The God of darkness?"

Extracts from: Ossipov's reply to a theologian

Ossipov: "There are many good, honest people in the church. The tragic thing is that they have fallen into a day-dream, hoping thus to compensate themselves for the troubles of life. They forget that their fellow-men are ready to help them, because the church has taught them not to look for help to men but only to the invisible powers, i.e. God."

Ossipov quotes various biblical passages to prove that man, who has created civilisation, culminating in the conquest of space, is no longer a victim of fate ... "A hundred million years hence man will not fear the end of the world, because he will be able to transfer himself to one of the other heavenly bodies."

"I am not afraid either about what will happen to my soul in eternity, for I have deliberately cut myself off from Christ. I cannot be cast aside by the heavenly Father. I have already cast Him and Christ out of my life, because I realised that they simply do not exist ..."

Ossipov thinks that the day-dream of religion is curable, thanks to psychology: "A person who is psychologically ill can be cured by scientific methods. The psyche is closely bound up with the physical, i.e. with the material substance. At the time of Christ, people with mental illnesses were thought to be possessed by demons. But modern science has cleared up this error. By driving out the demons, in which he believed, Christ did not show that he believed in God; he showed his sound common-sense."

Ossipov admits that certain pathological illnesses can be cured by "churchmen". But "if the church ascribes such healings to supernatural forces (i.e. to God's grace and mercy), this cannot be accepted as true. If the church does so, then it is either deceiving people without knowing it, or else deliberately playing upon their belief in superstition ... There is therefore nothing foolish about my rejection of religion and believing in nothing except the material world-order of pure knowledge."

Ossipov said, he could not keep silent, because he felt such inexpressible joy in participating in the discoveries of scientific research... He said, this joy could be understood by reading Matthew 5:15-16: "Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men..."

Ossipov writes: "The light of truth is burning in my soul. The clouds of religious confusion are clearing..." He therefore felt "no shame in coming forward now as an anti-religious propagandist."

In conclusion he writes: "To err is human. Yes, religion led me astray, as it has misled many other good, credulous people. The truth does not become clear to us all at once. It is our responsibility to discover it. If a former servant of the church now turns his back on it, mother Russia will still give him the opportunity to live and to work."

The priest A.P. Miroliubov writes, "Your faith will return and you will receive forgiveness", but I (Ossipov) reply, "no, faith will not return. I am not a reed shaken with the wind (as the Bible says) ... I don't need the forgiveness of a God who doesn't exist. It is enough for me that my glorious Soviet homeland has forgiven me and welcomed me. There is no greater joy than this ..."

Extracts from: In the USSR man is not alone without God

In this section appears a letter from a man called L.A. Zabiaka, from Konotop. He writes to Ossipov:

"Now you will hear our good Soviet word 'comrade' (which is not used by churchmen; if anyone asked to see 'comrade Father so-and-so, he would be laughed at). There is no finer word in the language of the church. 'Tovaritch' expresses the beauty of the life that started with the October revolution... If the church starts to persecute you, just remember that the great majority of the Soviet people welcome the courageous, noble step you have taken and are proud of you."

"Out of the dust and ashes of the church rises the new Soviet citizen ... No, man is not alone without God in the Soviet Union ... As soon as there are no more believers, things will go badly for God, not for us."

Does man need the consolation of religion?

Professor V. Kolvanovsky answers this question in the anti-religious periodical "Nauka i Religia" (Science and Religion), May 1961 issue.

It is obvious, he says, that man needs consolation during the vicissitudes of his existence on earth. From time to time he needs material or spiritual support - weaker-minded people more than strong-minded ones. But it should be the right kind of consolation.

To take his mind off his worries and centre his attention on God and His representatives on earth, makes a man feel morally depressed, rather than consoled... Phrases of religious comfort such as "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" are so imbued with fatalistic belief in the effectiveness of the supernatural powers, that they doom people to complete inactivity, paralysing them and making them powerless to struggle against their misfortunes.

Instead of mobilising the moral strength of the faithful to struggle against difficulties, "religious leaders prefer to abandon them, in their despair, to humble acceptance of the unfathomable will of God ..." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" says the Gospel, thus "making a virtue of spiritual poverty and complete resignation ..."

For a long time, religion was the only consolation, though a false one, that the oppressed masses could cling to, to enable them to endure their dreary existence. "The Soviet citizen no longer needs such consolation. He lives in and for his community. Everything he does, be it with his brain or his hands, serves to strengthen our community and to further its material prosperity and spiritual culture. His life finds its true significance in efforts for the good of the community, on which (in its turn) depends the well-being of the individual."

When a Soviet citizen is struck by misfortune, the whole community hastens to his aid, and leaves no stone unturned to help him. This help comes not only from his immediate neighbours, but also from outsiders. "In the village of Ershovo (Komi-Permiatsk district), for example, the houses were hit by a terrible storm, roofs were torn off, etc. Thanks to the fact that the inhabitants belonged to the Soviet community, practical help was immediately forthcoming. Ten houses were rebuilt by the workers' organisation 'Komipermles', five by the village's Department of Machinery, etc. Instead of merely bewailing the disaster and attributing it to God's wrath because of our sins, help was organised immediately and serious anxiety relieved ... That is the right kind of consolation. That is real help..."

"Unfortunately, this help does not always arrive in time. A number of collective communities show unpardonable indifference when their comrades are in trouble. Alone in distressing circumstances, people expect at least some slight sympathy, but none comes. It is in such cases that the Tserkovniki (church people) and the sectarians, with their smooth tongues and consoling sermons, suddenly appear from nowhere and try to enmesh the victim in the nets of religion. Adherents to religion are nearly always converts - people who have been struck by some earthly misfortune ..."

"While the communist party and the Soviet State mobilised all the workers to heal the wounds and repair the material damage caused by the war as fast as possible, the pedlars of religious comfort strove to lead the souls of the war-victims to God and make them forget their miseries in religion."

"Up to a point they succeeded, because for the people the bitter cup of suffering was overflowing, and it was years before life resumed its normal course. Certainly the war-victims did not all regain normal health and their capacity to work, and no amount of material help can

make up for such irreparable loss. But human suffering cannot defeat the victorious surge of life. Life goes on and comes to fruition, thanks to the indomitable energy of the Soviet people."

"Instead of tearful withdrawal into prayer, we offer the constructive throb of community life in all its aspects and with all its results. What is needed is moral consolation and the encouragement that will enable the individual to make a valuable and useful contribution to the life of the community."

The exploration of space

No. 5 of the atheist monthly "Nauka i Religia" (Science and Religion) contains a four-page supplement about Jurii Gagarin, the first cosmic astronaut. The sub-title reads "The Miracle has Happened".

"Yes, a miracle has happened, but that miracle has been wrought by men. It is the result of the tremendous powers of the human mind, of the indomitable human will, and of human skill... The penetration of space by a human being is a victory for materialism, and an overwhelming defeat for idealism, religion and spiritual obscurantism."

For centuries the advocates of the different religions have dinned it into people that the cosmos is impenetrable. "This view has now been completely exploded by Soviet science and by the glorious achievements of the Soviet people."

The basic theme of this number of "Nauka i Religia" is that people today are turning away from religion more and more, and that religion will soon die out altogether. The introductory article ("Everyone needs Peace") says: "Even those believers who are still under the influence of anti-communist propaganda realise sooner or later that a refusal to cooperate with the communists (who are the most consistent supporters of peace) weakens the forces of peace and strengthens the ranks of the imperialistic reactionaries..."

Not long ago the active church-people and bourgeois ideologists were prophesying that the communist society was bound to collapse because it had no religious basis. "They could not imagine how the communists - who do not believe in God nor in any mysterious supernatural powers - could organise human society. They still believe religion to be a strong unifying force and therefore indispensable. In their view, a social order which has no religious basis cannot last."

Answer: "Religion is not essential for friendship between nations; on the contrary, it is an obstacle to such friendship, religion sets up a supposed friendship which divides people because of their religious differences instead of uniting them..."

"The experience of the socialist countries proves that the liberation of man from his fear of God leads him to ethical heights, to the friendship and fraternity of the communist working community and hence to an unprecedented flowering of all the creative forces and gifts of the nations."

"The Scientists are storming heaven"

At the Brussels exhibition an atheist from the Soviet Union had the following conversation with a Roman Catholic professor:

The Professor: "We believe that the world exists objectively. You think so too. We say that development takes place outside our consciousness. You say so too. What are we quarrelling about?"

The anonymous atheist: "Yes, there is cause for dispute. It is true, the church recognises the existence of the world as an objective fact. But it says that matter has not always existed in movement and evolution; it says there was nothing until the Almighty created it. So the church-people regard the world, in all its diversity, as the expression of an ideal, divine origin. We godless materialists, on the other hand, base our views on man's experience in history and on the findings of science, and we believe that matter can be explained without God, in fact, that it leaves no room for Him in the universe. We make use of our knowledge of the laws of the material universe in order to help man."

"The conquest of space is one of the most convincing proofs of the unlimited powers of the human mind, the invincible will of the Soviet people to make life happy and successful."

"The Koran and the Cosmos"

"Today it is clear to everyone that there are no limits to what man can do, and no heights to which he cannot climb with his scientific inventions. It is true, there are still some places like Adam's grave, or the grave of Noah who saved himself from the Flood. But even at these sacred places many people wonder whether these stories are not just pious myths resulting from ignorance or cruel deception. Religion is still tenacious, but it is changing its positions."

"Cosmic Theology"

"The propagandists at the Vatican also had to comment on the flight of the first man into space, although they were not exactly delighted about it. Science has dealt one more blow to religion. The socialist system has once again proved its superiority to capitalism, which the Catholic Church regards as the only social order pleasing to God. The Vatican theologians are therefore straining every nerve in order to minimise this defeat and to put a good face on it."

"Concerning the possibility of the existence of thinking beings on other planets and stars, there are two views in the Vatican at present (according to 'Civilta Catolica'). Both these views accept the scientific hypothesis that such thinking beings do exist. But then this view is divided into two different concepts."

"According to the first concept, these thinking beings on the other stars are immortal. On the other stars there were no foolish Adams or inquisitive Eves. So it is like paradise there, and there is nothing for the Catholic missionaries to do."

"According to the second concept, every planet has had its Adam and Eve, with all the same consequences as on earth. The inhabitants of Mars and Saturn therefore experience all the same troubles as mankind. Bibles should therefore be printed for them with all speed. The only question is, in what language should they be printed?"

"The late Father Agostino Gemelli (a Franciscan), however, with his pre-Copernican mentality, disputed this possibility, because 'nothing is said about it in the Bible'."

"A special Commission is being appointed by the Vatican to consider the problem of evangelising the other planets, and to report to the coming Vatican Council."

"According to Cardinal Montini of Milan, the exploration of space by man enables him to realise its vastness and the incalculable multiplicity of stars, and this is a reason for praising the almighty power of God with a loud voice."

"During the past 1,000 years the obscurantism of the Vatican has forgotten nothing and learnt nothing."

"In reply to the question whether, as a theologian, he admitted the possibility of the existence of thinking beings on other stars, the French Jesuit Danielou replied 'Undoubtedly ... for instance there are the angels, whom we often forget.'"

"Nauka i Religia" comments: "If this is so, according to Father Danielou, our cosmic explorers are in danger of colliding with angels, if those angels infringe the traffic regulations in space ..."

"Pastor Fosc (France) expressed the view that Jesus Christ is Lord not only of mankind but also of the other planets. If there are any beings there endowed with reason, they are also servants of God."

"Nauka i Religia" comments: "On this question there is no more difference between Catholicism and Protestantism than between the Devil and Mephistopheles."

A story whose conclusion is unknown

(Istoria bez epiloga)

Young Anatol (Tolia) sent a letter to the editor of "Komsomolskaia Prawda" (the Organ of the Communist Youth Association in Moscow) asking what rights and duties he had as a member of the Komsomol. "The tone of the letter was so strange that it seemed to require a special answer." The editor therefore sent one of the staff of the paper, T. Snegireva, to see Tolia's mother.

While they were waiting for Tolia to come home, his mother explained that she hardly recognised the boy any more. He used to be so fond of his comrades, but now he preferred to be alone and not to talk. Pointing

to a dark icon she said: "He has put that up on the wall. Perhaps it's my fault. I used to pray too and I made Tolia pray with me. I'm only a simple woman. I've had a lot of trouble. My husband was killed in the war and I was left with three children. But I turned away from the church."

T. Snegireva saw the icon which the youngest boy had hung on the wall. The table was covered with radio newspapers and metal parts to make a tape-recorder - the eldest brother's hobby.

Finally they were all sitting round the table except Tolia, who was sitting on the sofa alone. His mother turned to him, "You have a visitor, Tolia. Show your manners."

Ivan: "Tolia does everything in his own way. He has even left the Komsomol."

Tolia: "You want to teach me? what are you then ... you Ivan, for instance ...?"

Ivan: "We are not talking about me, but about you. Do you get that?"
Tolia had already rushed out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

Tolia's story

"It does happen that brothers quarrel with each other", continues T. Snegireva's report.

Ivan had come back from the army and started giving his younger brother instructions: "Make a note of this: don't do anything against the wishes of your superior. He's stronger than you are and can always get the better of you."

Tolia: "And supposing he's wrong?"

Ivan: "He can get on without you. Understand?"

Tolia: "You wouldn't dare to say that in your job."

Tolia had discovered that a girl in the town where Ivan's regiment had been stationed was confidentially writing him love-letters, and was expecting a child from him. But Ivan tossed this aside with a glass of vodka: "Nitshevo. The next time you'll know better."

Tolia: "A decent chap doesn't behave like that."

Ivan: "You're too young to preach to me."

T. Snegireva: "A wavering soul needs moral support, otherwise anything may happen..."

In search of such support, Tolia went to the headmaster of his school, No. 740. He stammered out something confused about Ivan being unhappy, in spite of his good record at his job.

The Headmaster: "What right have you to set yourself up as a judge? Your brother is earning good money, otherwise you couldn't go to school. Is this how you repay him? What ingratitude!"

Tolia didn't know what to answer. Without Ivan's help he couldn't go to school. "But does gratitude mean that moral expectations are unjustified?" He didn't talk to the headmaster again.

Then Tolia met Michael, a pale untidily-dressed cripple in the thirties with sad blue eyes. Tolia told Michael about Ivan.

Michael: "Ivan is a scoundrel, but there are a lot of chaps like that nowadays. They are always on top, and honest people have no chance. Life is a dirty business, little brother."

T. Snegireva: "What could Tolia answer? If he had been older he would have known that such views are held only by weaklings. If you haven't the strength to change yourself and your life, the most convenient thing is to maintain that honest people have no chance, and that scoundrels always come off best."

Tolia was only 16, too young to distinguish between wisdom and cynicism. He couldn't understand what the word "honest" means. This led to a talk with Michael about God.

Michael: "Your soul is thirsting for righteousness; but it does not seek it where it is to be found. Religion could do a lot of good even today, little brother. If people would believe in God, they would be better than they are."

Then one day Michael brought a New Testament with him and suggested that Tolia should read it very thoroughly ... and as if by chance he said he was prepared to accompany Tolia to the Troitse-Sergieva-Laura in Zagorsk.

And when Tolia became a "believer", Michael urged him to send back his membership card to the Komsomol. The Komsomol wrote to Tolia's headmaster, "Tolia is going to wrack and ruin. He carries an icon and has lost his membership card of the Komsomol."

T. Snegireva: "Tolia's class-teacher is convinced that the school did not pay sufficient attention to the warning of his mother."

One day the class attended an hour's lecture on atheism. A member of the parents' committee spoke seriously with Tolia, and the committee informed the General Komsomol - but without enquiring why Michael had such an influence on Tolia. "This unworldly chap Michael can't be as bad as all that!"

"If they had only known how inhuman this Michael was... This militant believer with the cross round his neck carries on a tough struggle for his religious ideology. He is mainly interested in failures and sinners. He has no interest in anyone else. He needs people with similar ideas and he seeks them especially among those who are uncertain of themselves. In Tolia's case everything happened at once: Ivan's dishonesty, Tolia's own concern about what is good and what is bad, his inexperience and credulity ... Michael poured the sauce of religion over Tolia's troubles: 'Do you think the Komsomol will help you? What are you to them?'"

Snegireva: "The boy struggled as well as he could against cowardice and dishonesty and against Ivan's cynicism, and had sincerely opened his heart to others. Today he is suspicious and hostile to life. He has lost his confidence in people; they no longer matter to him."

At the technical school which he now attends Tolia keeps apart from his teachers and comrades, and he does not attend the school meetings. He refused to bring a photograph for his identity card: "Am I in prison here then?" although the official who needed the photo only wanted to help Tolia

"The conclusion of the story is not yet known. A seventeen-year-old boy cannot be described as a lost soul. The teachers wondered what to do to make a man of Anatol. They decided that they must make Tolia realise that life is not easy, and that people often make mistakes before finding the right way. They must not leave him in the lurch. They must answer his foolish questions and try to understand the difficulties of his confused mind. Otherwise someone else, i.e. Michael, would take the place of his teachers and friends."

The way out of darkness

Alma-Ata Film Studios (Kasakhstan) have produced a new film entitled "The way out of darkness". "The action is based on actual facts, not on fiction... It shows up the real character of the clergy, those holy jugglers with salvation and enterprising miracle-workers."

These are the opening lines of the new film (writes "Nauka i Religia" (Science and Religion), No. 5, 1961, and the facts it discloses are "shattering".

The producers have rightly not restricted themselves to any one particular confession. The camera has been aimed without discrimination at Orthodox priests, Moslem Mullahs, Jewish Rabbis, Baptist preachers, Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Flagellants and Old Believers. The idea is that, by whatever name a religious group may call itself, basically they are all the same. They all show the same obscurantism, the same insatiable zeal, the same appeal to a passive way of life, the same proclamation of salvation in the next world - thus cutting off the individual from the great creative achievements of the community.

We are shown the Orthodox Nikolsky Cathedral in Alma-Ata. Archimandrite Afanassy and priest Dimitry are celebrating a magnificent service. Everything seems to be quite normal, until certain details in the behaviour of the priests catch our attention, and it suddenly becomes clear that in their prayers they are not thinking of God at all. Then as soon as the congregation have left the cathedral, the priests forgetting all decency divide the proceeds of the collection between them, so that they can lead an easy life (and a far from ascetic one).

Now another Orthodox priest, Father Julian, appears on the screen. He is sweeping the street under the supervision of a militia-man. This theological teacher was punished in this way owing to bad conduct ...

Thus the audience can form their own opinion about the holiness and purity of the Orthodox priests.

The scene changes again and we see the mausoleum of the gigantic Khozra-Ukosh in Turkestan. A queue of people are waiting in front of the mausoleum in order to kneel before the sanctuary, built in the traditional style of Moslem architecture. The money-grabbing servants of the Koran claim that the mausoleum has miraculous properties. The Mullah, Kamin Khaidarov, is doing a flourishing trade with the gems from the

mausoleum, and as a sideline he "is head of an illegal clinic for sterile women." There is nothing holy about this saint. The purpose of all these religious observances is to ensure that money flows into the pockets of the clergy, those parasites on religion.

In the Alma-Ata Synagogue they are haggling over Matzoth, which are sold for thousands of roubles and even exported.

Then the film goes on to show that the clergy are not only guilty of greed, but also of crimes against human life. For example, 18-year-old Rose lies in her grave, as the result of "treatment" at the hands of the Mullah of Kustancy. Little Nurlan Khusainov is also dead - the victim of a Moslem circumcision. The film even shows the instrument used for this murder.

Among the episodes which follow is the crucifixion of the sectarian, Olga Stadel, who wanted "to take upon herself the sufferings of Christ". This fanatical crucifixion was prevented only by the intervention of the workers on the neighbouring kolchouse.

"Worst of all, these religious fanatics cannot leave the children in peace. There is the incredible story of Agafona, the sinister one-eyed abbess of an illegal convent in Temi Tau - the place where the workers are building the big new industrial centre of Kasakhstanskaia Magnitka. She hid little Kolia Sviridov in her convent, and at the age of ten he had never read a single book except the Bible. His face is shocking to see - not like the face of a child at all ..."

"That is the world of darkness which is gradually sinking into the past, under the mighty impact of our new life. Old religious traditions are desperately trying to survive, but life goes on, relentlessly. Larger and larger multitudes are turning away from religion, and the film 'The way out of darkness" shown them the right path."

At the end of the film the priest Afanassy has broken with religion. Kolia starts a new life in the Soviet school, and Olga Stadel who narrowly escaped crucifixion also finds her place in life. Frieda Peters, another character in the film, officially informs the Komsomol of her intention to leave the sect "Jehovah's Witnesses".

"The way out of darkness" will no doubt become one of the weapons in the arsenal of the anti-religious propaganda campaign, and be used to the full by those who fight to promote atheism.

Mental cases play the role of saints

In "Nauka i Religia" (July 1961) Professor E.A. Popoff, a member of the Academy of Medical Sciences in the USSR, tackles the question whether saints can be effectively cured of their religious illusions by effective medical treatment. He writes, "Today medical science has all the necessary means at its disposal to cure certain saints, whom the church has been using to strengthen people's religious faith."

Starting with the phenomenon of hallucinations (as related to the sphere of religion) Popoff states that hallucinations caused by softening of the brain "are regarded as a state of divine enlightenment, or of being 'possessed'".

Under the old régime in Russia the "Iurodivye" (the mental defectives, who were considered to be God's protégés) were much honoured... They were people suffering from mental illnesses, who drew attention to themselves through the strangeness and senselessness of their words and actions. Their admirers regarded them as saints who proclaimed the will of God.

One of these cases was a certain I. Koreisha, who was treated in the psychiatric clinic in Moscow under the Czars. He was the son of a priest and had been educated at the religious seminary at Smolensk. Koreisha suffered from schizophrenia. "This did not prevent many people from regarding him as a prophet. The clinic made the people who came to visit him (up to 200 a day) pay 20 kopeks entrance money, some of which was used to support poor patients."

The great Russian writer Leskov made fun of him, while the reactionary press (e.g. the "Domashnaia Besseda") regarded him as a clairvoyant who could see the past and the future.

"Psychic illnesses of this kind have ceased to baffle us today", writes Popoff. "75 per cent of these sufferers are cured." Popoff's analysis relates only to people who are regarded as saints.

Atheist stamps

("Nauka i Religia", No. 4, 1961; contribution from I. Shelest, Kiev)

"I have been collecting stamps for two years which deal with atheism, worship and religion. My collection is growing all the time, but for the first subject (atheism) I have no stamps at all.

"The Vatican, Western Germany, the U.S.A., South America, Spain and other countries issue new series of stamps each year in the category 'Religion and Worship'. These stamps depict the Bible or an episode in the life of different church leaders as well as important events within Catholicism, Protestantism, etc.

"However, I do not possess a single stamp showing the scientific struggle with representatives of the church and exposing their reactionary church policy, nor do I find any in any stamp catalogue.

"It is an incontestable fact that stamps have a tendency to influence people as a form of publicity, polemics and attack. Why should not series of stamps also be issued depicting anti-religious combatants exposing various sects, and why could not such stamps be issued in the USSR?"

"Nauka i Religia" comments: "Our editors fully share the view of the correspondent, that the issue of a series of stamps concerning atheistic subjects is essential. They have therefore immediately contacted the Ministry of Postal Communications. The Postmaster General, O. Makarov, answered that the postal authorities would consider Shelest's suggestion when planning the issue of new series of stamps for 1962."

A T H E I S T P R O P A G A N D A I N : P O L A N D

Anti-religious literature since 1959

At the third Congress of the communist party held in March 1959, V. Gomulka (the first Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party) states that "the church existed in order to satisfy the religious needs of Polish citizens. The church, being free from the State, was therefore free to take what action it liked as long as it recognises the existing régime and acts in accordance with the interests of the Polish People's Republic. Under no circumstances may religious activity be exploited for political purposes, as a means of dividing religious citizens from non-religious ones, for attacks on the policy of our party and of the People's Government". (Nove Drogi, No 4, 1959)

Literature is therefore being published in Poland discussing the particular problems of politics.

As most Poles are Roman Catholics, the atheist propaganda deals mainly with the Vatican "which according to church papers is well-disposed towards the Polish people" (I.P. Elvin: "Atheist literature in Poland" in "Voprosy Istorii Religii i Ateizma", Academy of Sciences in the USSR, Moscow 1960). The Catholic church newspaper and books "idealise the relation of the Vatican to Poland".

This became particular clear on the occasion of the celebration of the 1,000th anniversary of the Polish State.

The government reacted by issuing an appeal "to open a thousand schools during the next few years, in celebration of the Jubilee". (According to the latest news religious instruction is no longer admitted in the state schools.)

In face of this the church-men try to influence the Christians in projects which are diametrically opposed to the interests of socialism.

One publishing house which has gained merit by publishing atheist writings explaining the policy of the Vatican is the firm "Ksiazka i Wiedza" in Warsaw. It published a book on the papacy entitled "Szkice z dziejow papiestwa" (edited by K. Piwarski, 561 pages), which is among the standard works on atheism in Poland.

The recent history of Poland is described by Konstanty Grzybowski in "Polityka Watykanu, 1917-1929". Some of these chapters of this book have also appeared as separate pamphlets. They state that "during the first world war the Vatican did not sympathise with the formation of an independent Polish State, owing to its fear of the possibility of a social revolution in Poland."

Between the two world wars "the Vatican helped Paderewsky's bourgeois-clerical government which oppressed the masses in Poland", and later it supported Marshall Pilsudsky "who treated great provinces of Lithuania, White Russia and the Ukraine (which had broken away from Russia) as if they were Polish colonies."

Attention is drawn to the activities of Monseigneur Ratti (who later became Pope Pius XI), formerly papal Nuncio in Silesia, East Prussia, etc.; "these activities were contrary to the interests of the Polish people". Through the Concordat signed at that time between the bourgeois government of Poland and the Vatican, "the Catholic Church in Poland was given the status of a state within the State."

In order to prevent a rapprochement between Poland and the Soviet Union "the Vatican incited the rulers of Poland to submit to the Third Reich, which was the worst enemy of the Polish State and of the Polish people".

A large number of atheist books and pamphlets are being published on the contest with the Vatican, dealing with questions of ethics, criticising theological teachings and concepts of ethics, and advocating Marxist ethics.

Other atheist authors are Henryk Swiatkowski and Andrzej Nowicky, who are active members of the Polish Society for Religious Knowledge, and deal with all kinds of religious questions.

Among the periodicals published by the atheists in Poland, the most important is "Facts and Thoughts" (published in Bydgoszcz since 1957). This paper also concentrates mainly on the activity of the Catholic Church in the past, and today. It is intended especially for people "who are hesitating between faith and atheism, in order to win them over to atheism."

In Katowice appears the weekly paper "Arguments", which pleads for a scientific-atheist ideology.

In the "Euhemer Przeglad religioznawczy, Warsaw" (the organ of the Polish Society for Religious Knowledge) appeared an article by E. Kregelevich on "different types of religiosity". According to this, all religions which oppose the ideology of materialism are idealistic and metaphysical in character. "But they differ in form, and these differences must be explained."

Sigmund Poniatovsky deals with the question "The Catholic Church and Science". He is particularly concerned to show how "the church is trying to appropriate the achievements of science for its own religious purposes".

Another atheist author, Anton Tshubrinska, has published a "catalogue of the names of the devil".

Books by atheists in Soviet Russia are also published in Polish.

* * *

A T H E I S T P R O P A G A N D A I N : R U M A N I A

Anti-religious literature

Apart from a few books of Rumanian origin, atheist literature in Rumania mainly consists of translations or reprints of anti-religious pamphlets and articles in the Soviet Union.

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